

**APPROVING STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: Review of Foreign Ownership Policies for Broadcast, Common Carrier and Aeronautical Radio Licenses under Section 310(b)(4) of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended, GN Docket No. 15-236.

This item represents another positive, although incremental, step toward expanding permissible foreign investment by non-government entities in U.S. broadcast companies. As we have seen in a recent high-profile application, many of the Commission's policies and procedures for reviewing proposed foreign ownership in the broadcast context require factual showings that are difficult or just plain impossible to make for any modern, publically-traded company, or for that matter, any company. Extending the streamlined foreign ownership rules already used for common carrier licensees to broadcast licensees, as we propose, would certainly multiply potential funding options available to broadcasters.

But we have the opportunity in this proceeding to go beyond streamlining, and truly clear some of the roadblocks that are cutting American companies off from possible sources of foreign capital, at the same time that they give other governments a reason to freeze out investments in their own markets by U.S. firms. Many of our allies permit foreign investment in communications well beyond the 25 percent threshold to which we currently adhere. More capital options here at home and more investment opportunities abroad would greatly benefit Americans, which is why I believe that we would serve the public interest by permitting a greater aggregate proportion of non-controlling foreign investment without the need for individual approval. That is why I am pleased to see the item explore whether the Commission should establish a new threshold at 50 percent or a higher level before triggering the more rigorous and expensive Commission scrutiny. I am thankful to the Chairman for including this line of inquiry, and hope that stakeholders will fully develop our record on this point.

While I fully support this effort to improve the Commission's foreign ownership review policies and look forward to completing the proceeding soon, I must caution that nothing here would address the opaque and often very lengthy Team Telecom review process for foreign ownership, which in too many instances has devolved into a black hole of uncertainty. National security concerns can and should be fully addressed within the structure of a reasonable, transparent process that provides applicants with either good news, or substantive responses, in a timely manner. Having worked on this issue for quite a while, it has been encouraging to hear the feedback regarding my efforts to push reform from so many individuals who have had the "pleasure" of dealing with Team Telecom's "procedures."

On that, it is my understanding we may soon be seeing some progress on that front, and look forward to hearing specific details and implementing the changes. I appreciate the Chairman and the International Bureau's work to bring more certainty to the Team Telecom process. However, I firmly believe that the only way to fully correct this situation is to have Congress codify a CFIUS-like statute to govern the Team Telecom reviews. Accordingly, I plan to discuss this issue and raise it in opportunities before the Congress in the coming months.